



Arizona Department of Homeland Security

Operation Stonegarden Grant Program

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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1. Who is eligible to receive Operation Stonegarden Grant Program funding?

State, municipal, county and tribal law enforcement agencies in Arizona with AZPOST certified personnel who are able to work patrols in support of the Border Patrol mission are eligible. Grant recipients must submit an Operations Order to one of the four sheriffs of a county that borders Mexico to be eligible for funding. The county sheriff has final say on which agencies are to be included as part of the consolidated Operations Order for a county. Traditionally, the OPSG grant is reserved for agencies within 100 miles of the border, where there is a strong Border Patrol presence to coordinate OPSG activities.

2. What is the normal performance period for OPSG funds?

The usual performance period for OPSG Overtime and Mileage grants starts on October 1st and ends on March 31st, 18 months after the start of the performance period. OPSG equipment grants last 12 months, starting on October 1st and going through September 30th. Agencies normally submit their Operations Orders to their county sheriff in the winter or early spring proceeding the awarding of funds in the fall. Funds are usually awarded in the August/September timeframe, depending on final award and approval of Operations Orders from the United States Department of Homeland Security.

3. What is the role of the Arizona Department of Homeland Security (AZDOHS) in the Operation Stonegarden Grant Program (OPSG)?

Through an agreement with the sheriffs of the four counties in Arizona that share an international border with Mexico, AZDOHS administers the OPSG grant. AZDOHS also has a seat and one vote on each of the Operation Stonegarden Working Groups that meet to allocate funding to Arizona agencies in the border

region (the County Sheriff's department, Border Patrol, one municipal law enforcement agency in the county, one tribal law enforcement agency in the county, and the Arizona Department of Public Safety also have one vote on the working group).

4. What is the role of the Border Patrol in OPSG?

Border Patrol is the lead agency for operations under the Operation Stonegarden program. Consistent with grant guidance, OPSG funded activities and equipment should support the border patrol mission. All OPSG activities must be pre-coordinated with your Border Patrol Sector:

- Tucson Sector – Agent Wesley Northrop (wesley.northrop@dhs.gov 520-748-3216)
- Yuma Sector – Agent Roy Browning (roy.browning@dhs.gov 928-341-6557) and Agent Cesar Sotelo (cesar.sotelo@dhs.gov 928-341-6554)

The Border Patrol also has a seat and vote on the Operation Stonegarden Working Group along with the County Sheriff, AZDOHS, one municipal law enforcement agency in the county, and one tribal law enforcement agency in the county, and the Arizona Department of Public Safety.

5. What is the role of the County Sheriff in OPSG?

Apart from participating in OPSG operations and activities, the County Sheriff's departments of each of the border counties anchor the Operation Stonegarden Working Groups that meet to allocate funding. The County Sheriff's offices are also in charge of preparing and submitting the county level Operations Orders for Operation Stonegarden each year. These Operations Orders are used to set the overall policy for Operation Stonegarden within a county and also serve as the request or application for Operation Stonegarden grant funding to the Federal Government.

6. What is the role of the Operation Stonegarden Working Group in OPSG?

The primary function of the Operation Stonegarden Working Group is to meet to allocate available OPSG funding. In making allocation decisions, the OPSG Working Groups take into account various factors, including the need for funding to certain agencies based on the illicit activity occurring in an area and the impact that the funding will have in that area in combating transnational threats. Other items such as the available manpower of an agency, past performance under OPSG, past compliance with reporting requirements and grant guidelines, the quality of the OPSG plan/equipment request and other factors all can be taken into account by the OPSG working group in making allocation decisions. OPSG Working Groups meet on a quarterly basis.

7. What type of equipment may be requested by an agency in an Operation Stonegarden Operations Order?

Any equipment that is allowable under the Operation Stonegarden section of the Federal Authorized Equipment List (AEL) found at www.rkb.us may be requested on the Operations Order. Additional items, such as non-CBRNE off-road 4WD vehicles, ATV trailers and spike strips that are not on the AEL have also been awarded a waiver by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and are eligible under the OPSG grant. Op Orders that include items that are not on the AEL should be discussed with AZDOHS and Border Patrol prior to submittal.

8. May an agency exceed the approved quantity limit on a type of equipment if the agency is able to find a lower priced quote on the equipment?

No, an agency will only be reimbursed for up to the quantity of equipment items as approved by the OPSG working group. If an agency incurs a savings on a grant, the left over amount of funds will go back to the respective OPSG county working group for reallocation. All agencies within that county will be eligible to compete for the total amount of left over funds through a reallocation process at a later date.

9. If money is left over after purchasing all of the approved equipment, may that agency be approved for a modification to purchase another type of equipment?

No, if an agency incurs a savings on a grant from the awarded amount, the left over amount of funds will go back to the OPSG working group for that county for reallocation. All agencies within that county will be eligible to compete for the total amount of left over funds through a reallocation process at a later date.

10. What is the applicable guidance on the use of dispatchers?

Dispatcher overtime is allowable under the grant program; however OPSG participants need to be aware that there are strict requirements for their use under Stonegarden. Dispatcher's overtime is only reimbursable for dispatchers working in direct support of officers working stonegarden operations. The ratio of dispatchers to officers must be in alignment with the law enforcement agency's local policy. This policy and any related expenditures should be reasonable (i.e. one dispatcher for each OPSG officer working would not normally be considered "reasonable"). Dispatchers should also be utilized strictly for dispatch duties while working Operation Stonegarden, and should not be assigned to perform administrative tasks not directly related to dispatch duties.

11. If an agency purchased a vehicle under OPSG, may this vehicle be used for purposes other than Stonegarden?

No, the vehicle is to be used exclusively for Operation Stonegarden purposes. There is one exception to that rule; if necessary, the OPSG vehicle can be used in the case of a serious life/safety emergency. In such case, after the incident is over, an email justifying the use of the vehicle for the emergency should be sent to Tim Grubbs at tgrubbs@azdohs.gov and a copy of the justification should be maintained with the vehicle's mileage log.

12. If an agency was approved to purchase equipment to outfit vehicles (i.e. cameras, license plate readers), may this equipment be installed in a vehicle that is used for routine patrols?

Yes, as long as that vehicle will also be used on at least an intermittent basis for Operation Stonegarden activities.

13. What are some common items that are requested but are not allowable under the grant?

Some of the common items that are often requested, but are not allowable under the grant are: weapons and weapon mounted systems, drug detecting canines, infrastructure hardening items, and non 4-wheel drive vehicles.

14. Do all operations need to be pre-coordinated with the Border Patrol Sector?

Yes, all Stonegarden operations must be pre-coordinated with the respective Border Patrol Sector. Activities that are not pre-coordinated as stipulated by your Border Patrol sector are not eligible for reimbursement.

15. What is the reimbursement rate for mileage?

The reimbursement rate for mileage is currently \$.445 per mile. This amount is designed to cover both fuel and maintenance costs for vehicles used in OPSG operations. \$.445 per mile is the current maximum state designated rate for mileage reimbursement.

16. What is the 10% rule?

The 10% rule allows agencies to exceed expenditures on an individual line item within their grant by up to 10% of the total grant amount or \$25,000, whichever is less, as long as there is a corresponding under-expenditure of another line item within the grant to offset the over-expenditure. This applies to the mileage line item and the overtime line item on mileage and overtime grants and it applies to different items of equipment on equipment grants. For example, if a law enforcement agency was awarded a grant for \$112,000, with a \$100,000 line item for “overtime” and a \$12,000 line item for “mileage” expenses, the agency is permitted to exceed either their overtime or mileage expenditures by \$11,200 as long as they under-expend from the other line item by an equal amount to offset the over-expenditure. In other words, the agency is still required to stay within the overall grant amount of \$112,000. The same rule applies to equipment grants (each separate type of equipment is considered a “line item”). An agency is authorized to utilize the 10% (or \$25,000 rule, whichever is less) without prior approval from AZDOHS or the OPSG working group. Agencies must not change the budget listed in their reimbursement request cover sheet when executing the 10% rule. Modifications that exceed the 10% or \$25,000 limit must be approved by the OPSG Working Group.

17. If an agency was awarded funding to purchase an item of equipment, but due to circumstances, would prefer to purchase a different item of equipment with the funding, how should that agency proceed?

Mid-cycle grant modifications under OPSG are discouraged. Instead, that agency should forgo the purchase and allow the funding to revert to the OPSG working group for their county by making note of this on their next quarterly programmatic report (funds that are unspent at the end of the grant performance period also revert to the OPSG working group for the county). When the grant performance period is complete, the OPSG working groups in each county will meet to reallocate the reverted fallout funding. All agencies will have an opportunity to apply for and compete for this funding with the other law enforcement agencies in the county.

18. What is the quarterly programmatic reporting requirement on this grant?

Quarterly programmatic reports are required for each and every individual grant, including mileage/overtime grants and equipment grants. A separate report is due for each quarter covered by the grant period listed in the subgrantee agreement, regardless of whether any expenditure against the grant occurred during the quarter. Reports are due on the 15th day of the month after the end of each quarter:

- October 1st through December 31st: Due January 15th

- January 1st through March 31st: Due April 15th
- April 1st through June 30th: Due July 15th
- July 1st through September 30th: Due October 15th

The Quarterly Programmatic Report template can be found at:

<http://www.azdohs.gov/Documents/Grants/QuarterlyReportForm.doc>

19. Can Operation Stonegarden Funds be used for “investigational” work?

No, the primary purpose of Operation Stonegarden is for patrols along routes from the international border into the United States and for certain outbound operations. Agencies should also be careful to ensure that Stonegarden funds are not used to supplant inherent routine patrols.

20. Can Operation Stonegarden funds be used for field training?

No, Operation Stonegarden is for patrol along routes from the international border into the United States and for certain outbound operations. Training is not an allowable expense under the grant, except for backfill and overtime costs related to attending “507g” training for Port-of-Entry Operations provided by U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Office of Field Operations. Except for dispatchers, only personnel costs for AZPOST certified law enforcement officers are reimbursable.

21. Can Operation Stonegarden funds be used for detention and transport costs?

No, Operation Stonegarden is for patrol along routes from the international border into the United States and for certain outbound operations. Detention and transport costs are not currently covered under the Operation Stonegarden program in Arizona. Except for dispatchers, only personnel costs for AZPOST certified law enforcement officers are reimbursable.

22. What is the policy on grant extensions?

Grant period extensions for overtime and mileage grants will not be accepted as these grants cover an 18 month period and the new grant year funding is usually available for overtime and mileage by the time the previous year’s grant expires. Grant period extensions up to 12-months on equipment grants only may be considered if there is adequate justification. Extension requests up to 3-months require AZDOHS approval. Extension requests for more than 3-months, up to 12-months, require approval by the Operation

Stonegarden Working Group. The Extension Request Form can be found at the following link:
<http://www.azdohs.gov/Documents/Grants/AZDOHSExtensionRequestForm.xls>.

23. What types of costs are allowable under the OPSG grant?

Overtime, mileage, and equipment expenses are the primary categories of funding for OPSG. Specialized units of Arizona Department of Public Safety personnel are eligible for travel and lodging reimbursement, within certain DPS grants. The overtime line item of a grant can also be used for expenses such as dispatcher overtime costs, costs to bring a part-time officer up to 40 hour full-time status and costs to pay reserve officers. FEMA Grants Program Directorate Information Bulletin #321 includes other costs that could be allowable under OPSG: <http://www.fema.gov/pdf/government/grant/bulletins/info321.pdf>.

24. At the completion of the grant performance period, what is a stakeholder required to do?

All stakeholders are required to submit the following within 45 days after the end of the performance period:

- Final Quarterly Programmatic Report (please indicate whether you are reverting any grant funding)
- Final Reimbursement Request Form and all supporting documentation to receive reimbursement for expenses
- Email Equipment List (if applicable) to Christina Ambroult at AZDOHS at cambroult@azdohs.gov.

25. Can our agency be reimbursed for costs related to a Chief or other salaried law enforcement personnel working OPSG?

Yes, salaried officers may work and be reimbursed for OPSG operations, if they are acting in a non-supervisory role. Their participation in OPSG must be in alignment with the agency's local HR/personnel policies in order to be reimbursable. AZDOHS requires a signed letter from the city or town administrator or CFO level officer of the jurisdiction to the AZDOHS director showing the rate at which the salaried employee will be paid for participation in OPSG and confirming that the salaried employee will act in a non-supervisory role while working Operation Stonegarden. The rate will be reviewed by AZDOHS and must be considered "reasonable" as stipulated in the Code of Federal Regulations.

26. Does equipment purchased with Operation Stonegarden funds require labeling?

When practicable, all equipment items purchased with Homeland Security grant funds, including Operation Stonegarden funds, should have a decal or other marking that states "purchased with funds

provided by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security”. Please refer to the following link for more information: <http://www.azdohs.gov/Documents/Grants/FFY2009/FactSheetEquipmentMarking.pdf>

27. What types of “employee related expenses” (ERE) or benefit costs can be charged to the Operation Stonegarden grant?

ERE/benefits are that they are allowable if they are reasonable, are required by law or local policy and are costs that are associated with an officer’s participation in Stonegarden. In other words they have to be ERE/benefit costs that go up as a result of participation in Stonegarden. Benefit costs that are a flat fee per employee are generally not allowable for Stonegarden overtime details as the agency would be paying for them even if they weren’t participating in Stonegarden.

28. Where can an agency get more information on the Operation Stonegarden Grant Program?

For further questions, please contact Tim Grubbs, Strategic Planner at (602) 542-7062 or tgrubbs@azdohs.gov.